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THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & HELL
AND A SONG OF LIBERTY

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL
AND A SONG OF LIBERTY

BY WILLIAM BLAKE
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
FRANCIS GRIFFIN STOKES

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New York
1911

Therefore I print, nor vain my types shall be -
Heaven, Earth, and Hell henceforth shall live in harmony.

"Jerusalem."

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE text of the present edition of "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and "A Song of Liberty" has been collated with the example of the original issue preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Douce Collection, MM. 834.

Incorrect & archaic spellings have been retained, as well as peculiarities in the use of capitals: the punctuation, however, has been modified, since it is often conjectural in the original, where the impression is faint, and the commas are generally tailless: apostrophes, where omitted, have been supplied.

The Bodleian copy is uncoloured, and is lightly printed in four or five shades of ink, varying from brick-red to olive-green. By way of frontispiece there is inserted an engraving inscribed "Our End is come. Published June 5, 1793, by W. Blake, Lambeth"; the design is that known as "The Accusers," in the Print-room of the British Museum. Below the figure of Leviathan - p. 20 - appear the words "Opposition is True . . . ," the remainder of the sentence being illegible. The leaves devoted to the title and "The Argument" are printed on only one side; the rest, except the last, on both sides. There is no pagination.

INTRODUCTION

"IN my brain are studies & chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and these works are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality?"

Thus wrote William Blake to John Flaxman in the closing days of the eighteenth century. Riches - even what the least covetous of men would have deemed riches - were never to be his, but the fame of mortality has slowly been added to the approval of archangels, till now, looking back through a hundred years, we recognise in the obscure & neglected writer "an eagle with wings and feathers of air," soaring high above his fellows, and screened from their view by severing clouds.

Blake's active years coincided with slack water in the tides of creative literature: the glassy current of Augustan Poetry had ebbed to stagnation, & the coming flood of Romance was yet but a ripple on the reef. In one of his early poems he cries reproachfully to the Muses:

"How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!

The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few!"

and when the "Lyrical Ballads" revealed Wordsworth and Coleridge to a somewhat listless world, Blake's life-work as a poet was almost over, though his pencil and graver had yet some of their noblest tasks to perform.

The influence of "Ossian" and, to a less extent, of Chatterton, may be traced in his verse, but that Blake was in any real sense a type of Romanticism it is hard to admit: the current flowed past the solitary wanderer on the shore, but did not bear him with it; it scarcely even reached his feet. In fact, a genius so original as Blake, though of necessity conditioned by his epoch, refuses to be assigned to a group: the comet obeys the planetary laws, yet, despite astronomers, it remains a portent.

WILLIAM BLAKE was born in 1757, at No. 28, Broad Street, W., the residence and place of business of his father James Blake, hosier and nonconformist. The house still stands, and may easily be reached from Oxford Street by way of Poland Street. An inscription over the lintel of the humble shop informs the visitor to-day that a certain Angel there dispenses groceries – while the dingy locality is all athrob with the ceaseless roar of great dynamos, a manifestation of En-

ergy which it is to be hoped is an "eternal delight" to the inhabitants.

William was no ordinary child. At the age of four he saw God's face at the window, and, by his own admission, was dreadfully scared. Later on, he was somewhat unjustly chastised for boasting of having met the prophet Ezekiel - a future guest-friend. Once, on a ramble through the pleasant lanes and meadows of Peckham Rye, the lad saw a tree all aflutter with angels; but, now that we have learnt what to look for, we too may see the vision in the translucent lilac or the jewelled almond, irradiated by the sun of Spring, with a blue heaven beyond.

When he was fourteen, young Blake was apprenticed to Basire, a well-known engraver, and for the rest of his life the practice of engraving formed his only certain means of support. Upon his early progress in art limitations of space forbid us to dwell, though, as will immediately be seen, it is difficult to sever Blake the poet from Blake the painter.

In 1782 he married Sophia Boucher, a graceful girl, but quite illiterate, and sprung from a stock humbler than his own. She was Blake's inseparable companion and helper, and outlived him; pathos and humour are blended in her one recorded complaint, namely that her husband "was so little with her," for "he was incessantly away from her in

Paradise." Of her we shall have occasion to speak again.

In 1783 there appeared a thin volume, of some seventy pages, entitled "Poetical Sketches. By W. B." The contents also include two prose pieces, & "King Edward the Third," a fragment of "Shakespearean" drama.

This book, which is now of extreme rarity, was printed at the expense of Flaxman and another friend of Blake's, the Rev. Henry Mathew. The latter wrote an "Advertisement," in which he mentions that "the following Sketches were the production of untutored youth, commenced in his twelfth, and occasionally resumed by the author till his twentieth year."

The fact that the "Sketches" were never, strictly speaking, published, is in itself enough to account for their failing to attract the slightest notice. Yet their promise, as the work of so young a writer, was of the fairest.

The magic of some of the lyrics could not have been attained - scarcely even approached - by any poet of the day, except Burns, whose career was nearly at an end. In Mr W. M. Rossetti's words, "they have the same sort of pungent perfume, - indefinable, but not evanescent, - that belongs to the choicest Elizabethan songs."

Not doubtful, it would seem, was the future of the boy of fourteen who could write:

"How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the Summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide.
He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow."

Yet, after all, the auguries of the "Poetical Sketches" were misleading. They seemed to presage the advent of a great master of lyrical form, a polisher of imperishable "jewels five words long," a poetic despot whose facile Muse would obey her lord's lightest fancy; they conveyed no hint of the later giant, struggling with words as though they were fetters, and striving to deliver a message to the world which no language existed to express, and which poetry and art allied could but darkly shadow forth; thoughts, in fact, such as those which Swedenborg had called "inexpressible angelic ideas."

IN 1789, Blake, who had removed to No. 28 Poland Street, only a few hundred yards from his birthplace, found himself with an empty purse & a little bundle of manuscripts which he was unable, through lack of means, to publish in the ordinary

way. He accordingly had recourse to a mode of production suggested by the processes of the engraver. He wrote his verses - backwards, of course - with varnish on metal plates, and embellished them with drawings in the same medium. The exposed metal was then bitten away by an acid, leaving the words and designs in relief.

Later we shall find this method alluded to as "printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid."

From plates thus treated Blake took impressions in ink of a light tint, and finally, with his wife's aid - for she had proved an apt pupil - he coloured each page by hand.

The result was the "Songs of Innocence." A picture-book for children, it might be supposed from the description - nothing more, albeit the loving work of one who said in his old age to a little girl, "May God make the world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me."

Yet to those who have never been fortunate enough to see the original work, words must fail to convey an idea of its witchery. On first opening its pages we experience an altogether new sensation. No mere illustrated volume of verse lies before us, but an unparalleled complex of poetry and

painting. As the genius who devised the centaur, blending the characters of horse and man, produced a new form of unexpected beauty, neither equine nor human, so Blake, mingling the words of the poet with the designs of the artist, produced an effect hitherto unknown. Though the dainty miniatures of an illuminated missal, in all the bravery of their golden framework, delight & dazzle the eye, they leave the emotions untouched; but, in some inexplicable way, the "Songs of Innocence" make a direct appeal to the heart. The words are entwined with tendrils, and embowered in foliage; between the verses there flash out glimpses of radiant skies & cool pastures, of sportive children and browsing flocks. The overhanging blossoms, in emulation of the immortal hyacinth, seem to fling from their bells a delicate peal to be echoed by the music of the songs - "a confusion of delight;" and, finally, by the most subtle art, over all things there is cast, to borrow a phrase from Swinburne's impassioned eulogy, "a pure fine veil of light, softer than sleep, and keener than sunshine."

The verse of the "Songs of Innocence," and of the "Songs of Experience" which followed five years later, amply fulfilled the promise of the "Poetical Sketches," but it is needless to dwell upon poems which are now to be found in every

anthology, and upon which Blake's title to fame as a poet is popularly based. "The Lamb," the "Cradle Song," "The Tiger," and many more, have now put on immortality.

"As we read them," says Gilchrist, "fugitive glimpses open, clear as brief, of our buried childhood, of an unseen world, present, past, to come; we are endowed with a new spiritual sight, with unwonted intuitions, bright visitants from fair realms of thought, which ever elude us, ever hover near."

In the pre-existence of the soul, Blake, indeed, had a firm belief. Crabb Robinson relates that when he read him the passage from Wordsworth's famous "Ode," ending,

"Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"

Blake was thrown "almost into an hysterical rapture." The opening quotation of this Introduction was not intended wholly as an allegory.

"THE Book of Thel," an ethereal and mystical poem, was engraved, & similarly embellished, very shortly after the "Songs of Innocence," and a year later, namely in 1790, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" appeared.

We make bold to lay marauding hands upon the

opening sentences of Swinburne's appreciation of this wonderful production. He speaks of it as the greatest of all Blake's books:

"A work, indeed, which we rank as about the greatest produced by the eighteenth century in the line of high poetry and spiritual speculation. . . . Here for once he has written a book as perfect as his most faultless song, as great as his most imperfect rhapsody. . . . The book teems with heresies and eccentricities; every sentence bristles with some paradox. . . . The humour is of that fierce grave sort whose cool insanity of manner is more horrible and more obscure to the Philistine than any sharp edge of burlesque or glitter of irony; it is huge, swift, inexplicable. The rarity and audacity of thoughts and words are incomparable: not less so their fervour and beauty."

The designs which accompany "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," though similarly engraved, have an effect widely different from that produced by the tender adornments of the "Songs." Fortunate, indeed, is the possessor of this thin volume—now scarcely to be bought for twenty times its weight in gold—who can study at leisure its consummate pages. In some instances the relevancy of the drawings may be obscure, & their lurid atmosphere is everywhere charged with mystery; but in them are mingled the beautiful, the grotesque

and the terrible. Graceful figures, male and female, dart forth from sanguine flames; "the Giants who formed this world" crouch in their chains; "the monstrous serpent" of the fourth Memorable Fancy churns the dark billows of the nether deep with the iridescent splendour of his coils. The air we breathe is neither of earth nor of fairy-land, but of

"an ultimate dim Thule,
Out of Space - out of Time."

This is, of course, no place for a general discussion of Blake's art, but since in the succeeding works the pictorial element becomes increasingly prominent, a brief reference to one feature of his illustrations, which is observable in the "Marriage," may be allowable ere we dismiss the subject.

Although the beauty of the human form was ever in Blake's eyes - as with the Greeks, his professed masters - the supreme subject of the highest art, he nevertheless despised models. "Models are difficult," he said, "enslave one, efface from one's mind a conception or reminiscence which was better." It is not easy to avoid the reflection that perhaps, after all, it was Blake's poverty and not his will that consented to the deprivation, but there can be little doubt that it is to this cause that the occasional lack of due proportion in his figures is to be attributed - divergencies more glaring, perhaps, in the eyes of the trained artist and anatomist than to the layman

fascinated by the irresistible beauty of the composition before him. Mr De Sélincourt goes so far as say that "among his nudes are numbered some of the worst atrocities ever committed in the name of art." If this be so, great indeed is the genius that can make such atrocities delightful! And is there not compensation in Blake's avoidance of so-called realism? How utterly void of earthly taint are many of his pictured visions! The floating forms seem not even crippled by gross mechanic laws of earth and air; they glide at will through the impalpable ether of a fetterless heaven.

We can formally analyse "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" into five constituents, viz. the "Argument" or prelude; "The Voice of the Devil"; a series of "Memorable Fancies"; a collection of "Proverbs of Hell"; and what may be termed the Commentary, forming the connective tissue of the whole.

Although he alludes to the works of Paracelsus and Behmen, there is no evidence that Blake was more than superficially acquainted with them; on the other hand, from his youth up, he, as well as his friend Flaxman, had been under the sway of Swedenborg, whose writings were, indeed, as familiar to him as the Bible.

Competent knowledge of the tenets & methods of the Swedish mystic is therefore necessary for the

due understanding of Blake, but since it would be impossible to convey such knowledge even in fifty of these pages, we can only pause to mention a few salient and apposite points in Swedenborg's vast system:

All that is, exists by ceaseless emanation from God. Creation is an unending act. God alone truly lives. In this world Thought and Will are conditioned by Time and Space: in the next, Time and Space are controlled by Will. The Bible - certain books excepted - has a spiritual as well as a natural sense: every word of it is therefore holy. Nothing exists in the natural world which has not correspondence with the spiritual world. The symbolism of the scriptures is carried out in the minutest detail: "Butter denotes what is celestial"; "Cakes denote the good of spiritual love"; "Fish denote scientific truths." Not seldom a symbol denotes a pair of contraries; "Cows denote truths, they also denote falsities." There are three Heavens & three orders of Angels. All Angels have once lived on earth. There is no such person as Satan; Satan is Hell. All devils were once men. All societies in the heavens constitute, as it were, one man; hence Heaven is called the Grand Man. Even while on earth, every man, as to his soul, forms part of some member or organ of the Grand Man. Nevertheless Heaven and Hell are not in Space, but are only

internal spiritual states. Entrance into the spiritual world is, in fact, merely the opening of an inner consciousness.

All these divine truths, and many others, were revealed to Swedenborg in visions. Furthermore it is important to observe that, in the spiritual world, the seer beheld the Last Judgment and the dawn of a new Dispensation. Writing in 1758, he declares, "How the Last Judgment was accomplished, it was granted me to see from beginning to end. . . . This Last Judgment was commenced in the beginning of the preceding year 1757, & was fully accomplished at the end of that year." Now this was the date of Blake's birth, and if we add thirty-three years - the length of Christ's life on earth - we reach 1790, the date of "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." "And lo! Swedenborg is the angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up." In this splendid and daring metaphor, therefore, Blake depicts the release of his own imagination from the thraldom of the earthlier mystic - its resurrection and ascension into the freedom of a transcendental heaven.

The "Memorable Fancies" are written in deliberate imitation of Swedenborg's "Memorable Relations," an imitation often amounting to parody, in which Blake satirizes with grim humour the somewhat cold-blooded visions of his erstwhile master.

Such matter-of-fact preambles as "I was in a Printing-house in Hell," or, "As I was walking among the fires of Hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius," find numerous counterparts in the "Arcana Caelestia"; even the reference to the stench in the baboons' den seems a satiric thrust at the many pages of that work which reek with olfactory horrors.

Measureless, indeed, is the scorn which Blake pours on the self-conceit of his former master. He compares him to a man who, because he was a little wiser than a monkey which he carried about for a show, thought himself wiser than seven men. We are reminded of Swedenborg's own interview with Xavier in the spiritual world, when the latter confesses that "he becomes idiotic as often as he thinks himself a saint."

No small part of the "Marriage" was, moreover, intended, in Mr Ellis's words, "to rebuke Swedenborg for having used his faculty of vision to no better purpose than that of reducing all the visions of scriptural writers to perpetual references to the incarnation and to the human form of God, and to the praise of 'goodness.' He is derided for not having made prophetic books of his own."

"Now we have seen my lot," Blake cries to the patronising and pusillanimous angel in the fourth Memorable Fancy, "shall I show you yours?" Then

seizing the angel in his arms, he first flings himself and his companion into the body of the Sun, and then leaps into the void beyond Saturn. There in a phantasmal church he opens the Bible, "and lo! it was a deep pit, into which I descended, driving the angel before me."

Such was the dreary limbo to which Swedenborg's "analytics" led. Blake, accordingly, undertakes to show the more excellent way:

"I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Man's;
I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create."

THE "Proverbs of Hell" sprang from an independent germ. In 1788 there was published in London a small volume bearing the title, "Aphorisms on Man: translated from the original manuscript of the Rev. John Caspar Lavater, Citizen of Zuric."

The translation was the work of Lavater's fellow-countryman, the painter Henry Fuseli, who also designed the frontispiece, which Blake engraved.

The "Aphorisms" exhibit, for the most part, a somewhat insipid sententiousness, and might be termed typical specimens of copy-book philosophy, were it not that some of them attain the in-

tolerable length of a page and more. For Blake, however, the little book had a strange attraction, and he enriched its pages with "marginalia" which have fortunately been preserved. They are to be found in their entirety in Mr Ellis's indispensable work, "The Real Blake," but two or three of them may be quoted here: "You enjoy with wisdom or folly," writes Lavater, "as the gratification of your appetites capacitates or unnerves your powers." "False!" comments Blake, "for weak is the joy which is never wearied." "A sneer is often the sign of heartless malignity," runs the aphorism: "Damn sneerers!" assents the annotator eagerly. Again, when Lavater, with unwonted irony, suggests that he who would fain be popular must "court mediocrity, avoid originality, and sacrifice to fashion," Blake briskly adds, "and go to hell!"

Undoubtedly the "Aphorisms" soon afterwards journeyed to that fiery but splendid region, and were there sublimated & transmuted into the pure gold of the "Proverbs," in the crucible of the dauntless poet's brain.

The "Proverbs of Hell" contain the pith of Blake's moral, or unmoral, philosophy. But in tasting their quality, the uninitiated reader must be ever mindful of their author's "lust of paradox," the violence & perversity of his language, his determination to deliver his Gospel with an almost reckless

disregard of being misunderstood, his apparent delight in breaking with his precious balms the heads of Pharisee and Philistine alike. The Kingdom of Heaven undoubtedly suffered violence at Blake's hands, through his very eagerness to force his way into it.

Mr Arthur Symons has recently made the pregnant suggestion that the "Marriage" anticipates the most significant paradoxes of Nietzsche. "No one," he writes, "can think and escape Nietzsche; but Nietzsche has come after Blake, and will pass before Blake passes."

Both, certainly, insist upon the supreme virtue of Energy; Energy, moreover, to borrow the terms of Dynamics, not merely potential, & held wholly in check by Reason, but kinetic, and manifesting itself in motion, and impact, & transformation, and progression. In such a view, the Christianity of the sects is the religion of the coward and the weakling, since in it, to quote the author of "The Quintessence of Nietzsche," "everything that elevates Life, that stimulates Life, is kept carefully out of sight. The shadow of death hangs over all." And in precisely this spirit of revolt flames Blake's splendid paradox, "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires;" while the final exhortation of the last Memorable Fancy - "I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten

commandments"–hurls a like defiance against a moral system built wholly of "Thou-shalt-nots," and the inevitable hypocrisy that it entails.

"The worship of God is, Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best. Those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God." So spake the devil in a flame of fire to the angel who sat upon a cloud, anticipating, it would seem, the doctrine of the Over-man, and greatly disconcerting the angel. Nevertheless, it is hard to admit that Nietzsche's ideal would have found full acceptance with Blake. The stern and self-centred victor in the struggle for existence, secure in the "lordly pleasure-house" of his power, all-pitiless towards

"the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain,"

seems to accord but ill with the ideal of the sweet singer of "Mercy, Pity, Peace & Love." For Blake, "The Christ which is to be" was neither the Superman nor the Grand Man of Swedenborg's fantastic visions, but Humanity unified & eternized through imagination and emotion.

INTRODUCTION

EVERY one who indulges in abstract thought at all is a metaphysician of one school or another, & if it were necessary to classify Blake's metaphysical views, as belonging to any definite system of thought existing in his days, we should be probably led to assign him a place under the banner of Berkeley; though it may well be doubted whether he had ever read a line of the Bishop's works.

For neither the poet nor the philosopher has the material universe any existence, except as a series, more or less orderly, of phenomena or perceptions. Matter is a mere mode of the mind. It is emphatically laid down in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" that "Man has no body distinct from his soul, for that which is called Body is a portion of Soul discerned", i.e., bounded, "by the five senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age"; and what is true of the body is, a fortiori, true of matter in general.

Berkeley, in the latest stage of his philosophic development - as the author of "Siris," not a little tinged with Neoplatonism and mysticism - would assuredly have been found a more congenial companion by Blake than Aristotle and the dry bones of his "Analytics."

"Human souls," writes Berkeley, "in this low situation, bordering on mere animal life, bear the weight and see through the dusk of a gross atmosphere. . .

And if by some extraordinary effort the mind should surmount this dusky region, and snatch a glimpse of pure light, she is soon drawn backwards and depressed by the heaviness of the animal nature to which she is chained. And if again she chanceth . . . to spring upwards, a second relapse speedily succeeds into this region of darkness and dreams."

So we read in the "Marriage"—"Man has closed himself up till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."

But Blake believed that he knew the secret, and possessed the faculty, of obtaining more than a glimpse of the pure light; he believed, too, that what men call Reality is in truth but a dreamland, and that Imagination alone "in this age" can lead us to the Real.

The perplexity, in fact, felt as we strive to form a definite conception of Blake's intellectual fibre, may be lessened, much that is paradoxical or incoherent in his utterances with pen & pencil may be forgiven, if we realize that his abnormality consisted in an extreme development of the faculty of creative imagination. Some will look upon such hypertrophy with the eyes of the pathologist, others with envy, as the means of spiritual exaltation beyond the hope of common men. But, however it be classed, one of its effects is undoubted—namely, that while not necessarily conferring on its posses-

sor an exceptional power of communicating to his fellows supersensuous ideas nobler and lovelier than they could themselves conceive, it can scarcely fail to embarrass him in dealing with more limited conceptions. Imagination thus exalted approaches, in short, a new sense, incomprehensible to the ordinary man. Imagine a Gulliver cast upon an island of the sightless. Sharing the four senses of the inhabitants, he enters into all their narrower thoughts and feelings. In his speech, however, it behoves him to be wary, lest he stumble upon allusions and associations incomprehensible to his hearers. As a judge of scents and sounds and tactile impressions he finds himself indeed somewhat below the average Islander. His halting speech and apparent apathy soon brand him as a rather stupid fellow. Toleration is succeeded by derision. At length, exasperated by the scoffs of the blind, he harangues his hosts in a jargon conveying little meaning to their ears: "You prate of melodies and odours, but what know you of the shifting iris of the dove, or the crimson of the rose? What of the rainbow and the cloud? What of the starry vault? Your souls are impotent to enjoy these marvels and delights!"

"We always thought him a fool," is the surly reply, "and now we know him to be a madman!"

And somewhat thus - for here we can speak but by parable - somewhat thus it was with Blake. Yet

we must not forget that, in his view, the imagination was something far beyond a new sense: he would not have bartered it for the thousand senses of Micromegas. Before his incorporeal eyes, looking through "magic casements," open to him alone, he could summon at will phantasms of loveliness and terror, and at times doubtless they came unbidden. Nor did the aspects of nature viewed by his bodily eyes banish the mental vision. It is true that he went so far as to declare that "he did not behold the outward creation," and that it was for him "hindrance and not action," but in his next words he admits that natural objects served as a framework to be clothed upon in his mind:

"It will be questioned," said he, "'when the sun rises, do you not see a disc of fire, somewhat like a guinea?' Oh no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty!'"

Still more clearly is a similar thought expressed in the simplicity of these lines:

"For double the vision my eyes do see,
And a double vision is always with me:
With my inward eye, 'tis an old man grey;
With my outward, a thistle across my way."

Though a lunatic might confuse man and thistle, for him there would be no distinction between the inward and outward eye. But for Blake the vision is

"twofold always. May God us keep
From single vision, and Newton's sleep!"

"Newton's sleep" meaning the mental attitude of the man of science, absorbed in contemplation of the physical universe - an attitude which Blake despised, never dreaming that the imagination of a Newton might be as daring as his own. It should however be observed that Blake continually uses proper names - Voltaire, Bacon, Locke, Rousseau - merely as representative of opinions.

"Man must and will have Some Religion," says Blake. What, then, was his own? To the unqualified question, "Was Blake a Christian?" the answer can only be, "Yes - and, No."

In the early Spring-time of the Church, when it pullulated with heresies and super-heresies, a sect might perhaps have been found to claim him as a member. Mr W. M. Rossetti suggests the Marcionites. But then - fatal objection - they were ascetics. Certain general doctrines of the Gnostics Blake would probably have accepted: for instance, that the Jewish Jehovah was distinct from the Supreme Being; that the Creation was a catastrophe; that the visible Christ on earth was a mere eidolon of the spiritual Christ. But it is clear that we must deal warily with the opinions of a man who said, "Jesus Christ is the only God - and so am I, and so are you,"

and who also said, "I know of no other Christianity and no other Gospel than the liberty of both body and mind to exercise the divine arts of imagination." Of one thing at least we are sure: the religion of creeds & formularies Blake despised and detested; the fungus in which the angel was suspended over the abyss is in his eyes a figure of mouldering dogma, and the "seven houses of brick" in the same Memorable Fancy are churches and sects, of far different construction from that building of which

> "The stones are pity, and the bricks well-wrought affections,
> Enamell'd with love and kindness,"

of which he tells us in "Jerusalem."

Perhaps, after all, we may best describe Blake's religion as an unconscious modification of the Pantheism of the "Upanishads," without the Hindu corollary of abstinence from action. Life, as we know it, is but an interval between two infinite existences. Man is a "contraction" of the Divine Universal Mind: as he was once God, so God he will again become. But in Life he is cut off from communion with the Divine. Time and Space cast their dark shadows around -

> "our mortal veil
> And shattered phantom of the infinite One."

Moreover there are jailers in our prison-house;

mysterious gods of this world, "Jehovah" & "Satan," limited in their powers of good and evil, struggling for and plotting against man. Nevertheless "the Lord our God is one God," since Man's oppressors are but the creations of his own mind - or, rather, merely moods and aspects of it; for, we are told, "All deities reside in the human breast."

Man's Soul, though thus exiled from the Infinite, "clad in the muddy vesture of decay," and immured in the narrow cell of the five senses, still partakes of the divine in so far as it seeks to escape from its prison, or at least to look out through its one narrow window - the Imagination.

But the Imagination in this sense is by no means to be confused with that lower manifestation of the same faculty which is merely vivid memory, nor even with that higher form which enables us, in Ruskin's words, "to vision forth the ministry of angels beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round." By Imagination Blake meant what he often calls the Poetic Genius - the transcendental god-like power that is truly creative, & not merely plastic, drawing its raw material, not from the universe of experience, but from the external yet all-pervading supersensuous Infinite.

"As none by travelling over known lands," says Blake, "can find out the unknown, so, from already

acquired knowledge Man could not acquire more; therefore an universal Poetic Genius exists." It was not for the rapt seer to clothe himself with the humility of Akbar, and confess -

"I can but lift the torch
Of Reason in the dusky cave of life;"

it was his practical religion, rather, never to flag in the struggle to bathe himself in the celestial light which he knew to enfold all without, and to tell the vision to his fellows in the gloom.

"RINTRAH roars, and shakes his fires in the burden'd air!" such is the enigmatic sentence flung in the face of the reader of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" who begins at the beginning; though it should be remembered that the "Argument," like most prefaces, was probably written after the rest of the book. Who, or what, is Rintrah? To answer this question, however imperfectly, we must go far afield. We must first realize the astonishing fact that Blake, alone of men, undertook to construct, not an allegory or an epic, but an entire Mythology. He dared to elaborate a system of symbolical myths, partly to clothe therewith the too startling nakedness of his philosophy, and partly to serve as an instrument of research in supersensuous regions.

INTRODUCTION

No bolder conception ever entered a poet's mind. All other Mythologies have been the slow growth of ages, and have been evolved, almost unconsciously, from the observation of natural phenomena, or the half-forgotten traditions of national origins; but Blake endeavoured to bring to maturity in his own lifetime a Mythology as elaborate as that of the Greeks or the Hindus, &, because artificial, more consistent. And this Mythology formed no mere poetic cosmogony, but sought to unfold the progress of the human soul - to probe its hidden struggles and aspirations.

Hence arose the marvellous poems of "Jerusalem," "Vala," "Urizen," and the rest, in addition to an unknown mass of writings destroyed after Blake's death. The protagonists in these so-called "Prophetic Books," such as Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Urthona, are, like Indra and Varuna, or Thor and Balder, symbols - though not, like them, symbols of the rain-cloud, the sky, the storm, or the dawn, but of psychic moods and attributes, having varying connotations, and being at once allusive and elusive.

When the emblems employed are invariable & definite, symbolism need involve no great mystery.

Herbert Spencer's "First Principles" might conceivably be thrown into operatic form, without being unintelligible - if a key were provided. The

change "from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity" could, indeed, be as clearly displayed in the ballet as are the solar and lunar eclipses in "The Rehearsal"!

But the key to the "Prophetic Books" has painfully to be sought, for in them moods and attributes of the mind are sometimes so strongly personified that "Men they seem to one another," while again they may appear as geographical regions through which we mortals pass. Symbols are even themselves symbolized. Need we greatly wonder, therefore, if these poems were long regarded as little better than a madman's ravings? "Listen to the fool's reproach; it is a kingly title!" wrote Blake, anticipating his fate.

In exegesis of the "Prophetic Books" Swinburne was a pioneer, and his famous "Essay"-1868-pointed out many paths for future investigators. Twenty-five years later Mr Ellis and Mr Yeats astonished the world of letters by laying before it the results of their exploration of the same haunted and mysterious realm. Some may still look upon the strange tidings which they brought back, with the suspicion which attaches to travellers' tales. But the route is now open to all, & none have the right of criticism who have not traversed it.

This reference to the "Prophetic Books" is by no means a mere digression, for Blake was undoubt-

edly occupied with his Mythology when he wrote "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," and there are in the latter not a few cryptic passages only to be read by the light cast upon them by the succeeding writings. If we regard the "Marriage" as a strange and splendid portal through which the neophyte must pass, ere, greatly daring, he essays the formidable chaos beyond, we must remember that of the hieroglyphs which adorn that portal many can only be interpreted by reference to the dark region to which it leads. It is for this reason that an entirely independent "explanation" of "The Marriage of Heaven & Hell" is impossible.

It has been hinted above that Blake's symbolism was partly an instrument of research. James Thomson, the author of "The City of Dreadful Night," seems to have first indicated the analogy between the personages of the Great Myth and the X, Y, Z, of the algebraist. Their analogy is, perhaps, still closer to the "imaginaries" of analytical geometry. In this science symbols lead to "unintelligible" results that are of the highest practical importance. To the purblind eye of Common Sense concentric circles cannot possibly intersect one another, yet the geometer assures us, without a blush, that his symbols aver that they all pass through the same two circular points at infinity; and from this gibberish he deduces propositions which even Com-

mon Sense admits to be both true and valuable. A warning, this, against scoffing at the "scales and rundles" by which alone the topmost pinnacles of speculation can be surmounted.

Meanwhile, "Rintrah roars:" He is one of the four sons of Los;

"Rintrah fierce, and Palamabron mild and piteous,
Theotormon filled with care, Bromion loving science"-

thus they are enumerated in the First Part of "Milton." Rintrah's emblem is a lion, as we learn in "Europe:"

"O lion Rintrah, raise thy fury from thy forests black!"

He controls a flaming forge, beating out the Plow and Harrow, to pass over the nations. He symbolizes intellectual enthusiasm, the restless spirit of energy, wrathful rebellion alike against conventional ethics and against the fleshy fetters of the soul. Darkly the "Argument" hints of a departed golden age of innocence, but not of ignorance, when righteousness was not bondage: but with the Law enters Hypocrisy, and the "Just Man" is driven into the desert of artificial morality, where baser passions threaten him like beasts of prey. Hungry clouds, not big with blessings, hang low upon his path.

We have already touched upon the remarkable

reference to Swedenborg's vision of Judgment with which the book opens, and this should be read again in connection with the "Commentary" following the fourth Memorable Fancy.

In "The Voice of the Devil," & the paragraphs immediately succeeding, we are presented with the true "argument" of the book. "Without Contraries is no progression"; Humanity itself could not exist save through the clash of antagonisms. Good, which is Heaven, "is the passive that obeys Reason"; Evil, which is Hell, "is the active springing from Energy." We must rid our minds, therefore, of the conventional meanings attached to the terms used, and of the associated prejudices. The marriage of Heaven and Hell is the reconciliation, or, at all events, the union, of Energy and Reason.

WE have already referred to two daring passages in which Blake seems to rebel against the "mind-formed manacles" of conventional morality. To this subject we must recur, for to slur over or ignore his views on that department of Ethics which to some minds seems alone to constitute "morality," is not merely to evade a difficulty, but to omit reference to a most interesting feature of the poet's philosophy.

Upon the fly-leaf of his copy of Lavater's "Aphorisms," Blake jotted down this remarkable note:-"The hindering of Act in another . . . is Vice, but all Act is Virtue. To hinder another is not an act. It is the contrary. It is a restraint in action, both in ourselves & in the person hindered; for he who hinders another omits his own duty at the same time. Murder is hindering another; theft is hindering another; backbiting, undermining, circumventing, or whatever is negative is vice. But the origin of this mistake in Lavater and his contemporaries is-they suppose that Woman's Love is Sin. In consequence, all the loves & graces, with them, are sins."

To regard Blake-the faithful husband of one wife-as a typical libertine, is merely ridiculous. On the other hand, it is equally absurd to pretend that his views on the relations of the sexes were not of the most heterodox and subversive kind, and it must be admitted that what Sir Thomas Browne, from another point of view, calls the "vulgar and trivial way of marriage," found no great favour in his eyes. "Many short follies-that is what ye call love. And marriage maketh an end of many short follies-being one long stupidity": thus spake Zarathustra.

It is said that Blake once affected his wife to tears by proposing to introduce a concubine into their

narrow household. The improbability of the story lies in the modesty of the alleged suggestion. The poet's fervid fancy would, questionless, have led him to emulate that wisest of men, whose songs, although they were "a thousand & five," yet barely out-numbered the inmates of his seraglio.

Blake, it would appear, unburdened his soul when he wrote:

"To a lovely myrtle bound,
Blossoms showering all around,
Oh how weak and weary I
Underneath my myrtle lie!
Why should I be bound to thee,
O my lovely myrtle tree?
Love, free love, cannot be bound
To any tree that grows on ground"-

yet it seems clear that he was not pining for a grove of lovely myrtles, but was simply exasperated with the chain which bound him to his tree. He scorned and hated, in fact, what he considered the artificial bondage of conventional morality, as an ever-present symbol of the gagged and fettered state of Humanity "in this age."

Boundless liberty of thought, however, never led in Blake's case to licence of language. No writer ever treated of emancipated passion with greater dignity and restraint. Even when he sings in "The Vision of the Daughters of Albion" of "Happy,

happy Love! free as the mountain wind!" his joyous exaltation scarcely tempts him to the use of phraseology comparable to what Milton quaintly terms "the jolliest expressions" of the "over-frolic" Canticles.

Blake's liberal views may also be regarded in a somewhat different light. His life-work in literature and art reflects a passionate protest against the disparagement of the body. In his belief, to use Mr Binyon's words, "the Puritanism that would deny the body is a kind of infidelity"–for is not the body but an aspect of the soul? He realized to the full the utter incompatibility of Puritanism and Art. It is true that Puritans claim as one of themselves him who has painted in immortal phrase the radiant beauty of

"Eve
Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
Of three that in mount Ida naked strove";

but Blake himself incidentally hints a solution of the paradox: Milton "was a true Poet, and of the Devil's party without knowing it"!

That Blake looked too persistently at but one side of the shield may freely be granted; but no enthusiastic teacher is for ever dinning the views of his opponents into the ears of his audience. It is

true that dangers lurk in one-sided arguments - Luther pushed Justification by Faith perilously near Damnation by Works - yet it is but just to bear in mind that the poet was quite conscious that the shield had another side, that free love inevitably becomes moral anarchy for weak & ignoble souls, & that divine Philosophy may become "Procuress to the Lords of Hell." After all, it was Blake who wrote:

"The harlot's cry from street
Shall weave old England's winding-sheet."

Could a Hogarth moralize more grimly? Nor let us forget that Love had for Blake more than one meaning:

"Seek Love in the pity of others' woe,
In the gentle relief of another's care,
In the darkness of night and the winter's snow,
With the naked & outcast, seek Love there."

"The Song of Liberty," with which the volume ends, is now held to be a distinct work. Regarded apart from its place in the symbolic scheme of the Mythology, it is obviously a paean called forth by the great events then unfolding themselves on the Continent.

Blake saw "the son of fire in his eastern cloud . . . loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying, 'Empire is no more!'" Needless to say that his "faith was pledged to new-born Liberty" & to

the hope that "now the Lion and the Wolf shall cease"—for the Reign of Terror was not yet.

Exulting, he "stamps the stony law to dust," and then, as the final chorus closes, there flames forth that triumphant confession of faith—to be echoed and re-echoed in the Prophetic Books—

"For everything that lives is holy!"

AND now we must no longer bar the way. Let it be clearly understood that this brief Introduction is intended neither as a commentary nor as an epitome. Adequately to comment on this wonderful book would need many times the space at our disposal, while to epitomize it would be to distil a quintessence. We have but endeavoured to lay before the reader some needful preliminary information, and to offer a few remarks which may possibly prove suggestive. In fact, we have tried to

"give you the end of a golden string;
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall!"

And surely, of those who sympathetically study "The Marriage of Heaven & Hell," few will rest content therewith; rather will they be tempted to plunge into the dreamy labyrinth of the vast Mythology which succeeds it. They will thread the

moony shades of Beulah, and the dismal forests of Entuthon Benython; they will dare beyond the land of death eternal to the domes of Golgonooza, where ten thousand demons labour at the anvils of Los; and they will assuredly grant that, unfathomable though much of his poetry may seem, the obscurity of Blake is not the gloom of reek & fog, but the darkness of the thunder-cloud, whence issue flashes of elemental fire, and pealing voices which echo for ever in the memory of those who have ears to hear.

F.G.S.

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

THE ARGUMENT

RINTRAH roars and shakes his fires in the burden'd air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.
Once meek, and in a perilous path,
The just man kept his course along
The vale of death.
Roses are planted where thorns grow,
And on the barren heath
Sing the honey bees.

Then the perilous path was planted:
And a river, and a spring
On every cliff and tomb;
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth.

Till the villain left the paths of ease,
To walk in perilous paths, and drive
The just man into barren climes.

Now the sneaking serpent walks
In mild humility,
And the just man rages in the wilds
Where lions roam.

Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

AS a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell revives.

And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb: his writings are the linen clothes folded up.

Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise; see Isaiah xxxiv & xxxv Chap:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil.

Good is the passive that obeys Reason; Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

THE VOICE OF THE DEVIL

ALL Bibles, or sacred codes, have been the causes of the following Errors:

1. That Man has two real existing principles, Viz.: a Body & a Soul.

2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body, & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.

3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following Contraries to these are True:

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul, for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body, and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight.

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrain'd, it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

The history of this is written in Paradise Lost, & the Governor or Reason is call'd Messiah. And the original Archangel, or possessor of the command

of the heavenly host, is call'd the Devil or Satan, and his children are call'd Sin & Death.

But in the Book of Job Milton's Messiah is call'd Satan. For this history has been adopted by both parties.

It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was cast out, but the Devil's account is, that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss.

This is shown in the Gospel, where he prays to the Father to send the comforter, or Desire, that Reason may have Ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire.

Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah.

But in Milton; the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Ratio of the five senses, & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum!

NOTE. - The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it.

A MEMORABLE FANCY

AS I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius; which to Angels look like torment and insanity, I collected some of their Proverbs; thinking that as the sayings used in a nation mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell shew the nature of Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments.

When I came home, on the abyss of the five senses, where a flat sided steep frowns over the present world, I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock: with corroding fires he wrote the following sentence, now percieved by the minds of men, & read by them on earth:

"How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?"

PROVERBS OF HELL

IN seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.

Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead,

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.

He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

The cut worm forgives the plow.

Dip him in the river who loves water.

A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star.

Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

The busy bee has no time for sorrow.

The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure.

All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap.

Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of dearth.

No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.

A dead body revenges not injuries.

The most sublime act is to set another before you.

If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.

Folly is the cloke of knavery.

Shame is Pride's cloke.

Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God;
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God;

The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God;
The nakedness of woman is the work of God.

Excess of sorrow laughs; Excess of joy weeps.

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, & the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.

The fox condemns the trap, not himself.

Joys impregnate; Sorrows bring forth.

Let man wear the fell of the lion; woman, the fleece of the sheep.

The bird, a nest; the spider, a web; man, friendship.

The selfish smiling fool, & the sullen frowning fool, shall be both thought wise, that they may be a rod.

What is now proved was once, only imagin'd.

The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbet, watch the roots; the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant, watch the fruits.

The cistern contains; the fountain overflows.

One thought fills immensity.

Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you.

Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth.

The eagle never lost so much time, as when he submitted to learn of the crow.

The fox provides for himself, but God provides for the lion.

Think in the morning; Act in the noon; Eat in the evening; Sleep in the night.

He who has suffer'd you to impose on him knows you.

As the plow follows words, so God rewards prayers.

The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.

Expect poison from the standing water.

You never know what is enough, unless you know what is more than enough.

Listen to the fools' reproach! It is a kingly title!

The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth.

The weak in courage is strong in cunning.

The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow, nor the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey.

The thankful reciever bears a plentiful harvest.

If others had not been foolish, we should be so.

The soul of sweet delight can never be defil'd.

When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius; lift up thy head!

As the catterpiller chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.

To create a little flower is the labour of ages.

Damn, braces: Bless, relaxes.

The best wine is the oldest, the best water the newest.

Prayers plow not! Praises reap not!
Joys laugh not! Sorrows weep not!

The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion.

As the air to a bird, or the sea to a fish, so is contempt to the contemptible.

The crow wish'd every thing was black, the owl, that every thing was white.

Exuberance is Beauty.

If the lion was advised by the fox, he would be cunning.

Improvent makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement, are roads of Genius.

Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.

Where man is not, nature is barren.

Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd.

Enough! or Too much.

HEAVEN AND HELL

THE ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could percieve.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city and country, placing it under its mental deity,

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of, & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounc'd that the Gods had order'd such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

A MEMORABLE FANCY

THE Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how they dared so roundly to assert, that God spake to them; and whether they did not think at the time, that they would be misunderstood, & so be the cause of imposition.

Isaiah answer'd: I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing, and as I was then perswaded, & remain confirm'd, that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences but wrote.

Then I asked: does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?

He replied: All poets believe that it does, & in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm perswasion of any thing.

Then Ezekiel said: The philosophy of the east taught the first principles of human perception; some nations held one principle for the origin & some another; we of Israel taught that the Poetic Genius (as you now call it) was the first principle, and all the others merely derivative, which was the cause of our despising the Priests & Philosophers of other countries, and prophecying that all Gods

would at last be proved to originate in ours, & to be the tributaries of the Poetic Genius; it was this, that our great poet King David desired so fervently & invokes so patheticly, saying, by this he conquers enemies & governs kingdoms; and we so loved our God, that we cursed in his name all the deities of surrounding nations, and asserted that they had rebelled: from these opinions the vulgar came to think that all nations would at last be subject to the jews.

This, said he, like all firm perswasions, is come to pass, for all nations believe the jews' code and worship the jews' God, and what greater subjection can be?

I heard this with some wonder, & must confess my own conviction.

After dinner I ask'd Isaiah to favour the world with his lost works; he said none of equal value was lost. Ezekiel said the same of his.

I also asked Isaiah what made him go naked and barefoot three years? he answer'd; the same that made our friend Diogenes the Grecian.

I then asked Ezekiel why he eat dung, & lay so long on his right & left side? he answer'd; the desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite; this the North American tribes practise; & is he honest who resists his genius or conscience, only for the sake of present ease or gratification?

THE ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true, as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite, and holy, whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed, every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

A MEMORABLE FANCY

I WAS in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a cave's mouth; within, a number of Dragons were hollowing the cave.

In the second chamber was a Viper folding round the rock & the cave, and others adorning it with gold, silver and precious stones.

In the third chamber was an Eagle, with wings and feathers of air, he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite; around were numbers of Eagle like men, who built palaces in the immense cliffs.

In the fourth chamber were Lions of flaming fire, raging around & melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were Unnam'd forms, which cast the metals into the expanse.

There they were reciev'd by Men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries.

THE Giants who formed this world into its sensual existence, and now seem to live in it in chains, are in truth, the causes of its life & the sources of all activity, but the chains are the cunning of weak and tame minds, which have power to resist energy; according to the proverb, the weak in courage is strong in cunning.

Thus one portion of being is the Prolific, the other, the Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains, but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.

But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea recieved the excess of his delights.

Some will say, Is not God alone the Prolific?

I answer, God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men.

These two classes of men are always upon earth, & they should be enemies: whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence.

Religion is an endeavour to reconcile the two.

NOTE. Jesus Christ did not wish to unite but to seperate them, as in the Parable of sheep and goats! & he says, I came not to send Peace but a Sword.

Messiah, or Satan, or Tempter, was formerly thought to be one of the Antediluvians, who are our Energies.

HEAVEN AND HELL

A MEMORABLE FANCY

AN Angel came to me and said: O pitiable foolish young man! O horrible! O dreadful state! consider the hot burning dungeon thou are preparing for thyself to all eternity, to which thou art going in such career.

I said: perhaps you will be willing to shew me my eternal lot, & we will contemplate together upon it, and see whether your lot or mine is most desirable.

So he took me thro' a stable & thro' a church & down into the church vault, at the end of which was a mill: thro' the mill we went, and came to a cave; down the winding cavern we groped our tedious way, till a void, boundless as a nether sky appear'd beneath us, & we held by the roots of trees and hung over this immensity; but I said, if you please, we will commit ourselves to this void, and see whether providence is here also; if you will not, I will? but he answer'd, do not presume O young-man, but as we here remain, behold thy lot, which will soon appear when the darkness passes away.

So I remain'd with him, sitting in the twisted root of an oak; he was suspended in a fungus which hung with the head downward into the deep.

By degrees we beheld the infinite Abyss, fiery as the smoke of a burning city; beneath us, at an immense distance, was the sun, black but shining; round it were fiery tracks on which revolv'd vast

spiders, crawling after their prey; which flew, or rather swum in the infinite deep, in the most terrific shapes of animals sprung from corruption, & the air was full of them, & seem'd composed of them: these are Devils, and are called Powers of the air.

I now asked my companion which was my eternal lot? he said, between the black & white spiders.

But now, from between the black & white spiders a cloud and fire burst and rolled thro' the deep, black'ning all beneath, so that the nether deep grew black as a sea & rolled with a terrible noise: beneath us was nothing now to be seen but a black tempest, till, looking east between the clouds and the waves, we saw a cataract of blood mixed with fire, and not many stones' throw from us appear'd and sunk again the scaly fold of a monstrous serpent; at last, to the east, distant about three degrees, appear'd a fiery crest above the waves; slowly it reared, like a ridge of golden rocks, till we discover'd two globes of crimson fire, from which the sea fled away in clouds of smoke, and now we saw it was the head of Leviathan; his forehead was divided into streaks of green & purple, like those on a tyger's forehead: soon we saw his mouth & red gills hang just above the raging foam, tinging the black deep with beams of blood, advancing toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence.

My friend the Angel climb'd up from his station

into the mill; I remain'd alone, & then this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river, by moonlight, hearing a harper who sung to the harp, & his theme was: The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind.

But I arose, and sought for the mill, & there I found my Angel, who, surprised, asked me, how I escaped?

I answer'd: All that we saw was owing to your metaphysics; for when you ran away, I found myself on a bank, by moonlight, hearing a harper. But now we have seen my eternal lot, shall I shew you yours? he laugh'd at my proposal; but I by force suddenly caught him in my arms, & flew westerly thro' the night, till we were elevated above the earth's shadow: then I flung myself with him directly into the body of the sun; here I clothed myself in white, & taking in my hand Swedenborg's volumes sunk from the glorious clime, and passed all the planets till we came to saturn; here I staid to rest, & then leap'd into the void, between saturn & the fixed stars.

Here, said I, is your lot, in this space, if space it may be call'd.

Soon we saw the stable and the church, & I took him to the altar and open'd the Bible, and lo! it was a deep pit, into which I descended, driving the Angel before me; soon we saw seven houses of

brick, one we enter'd; in it were a number of monkeys, baboons, & all of that species chain'd by the middle, grinning and snatching at one another, but witheld by the shortness of their chains; however I saw that they sometimes grew numerous, and then the weak were caught by the strong, and with a grinning aspect first coupled with & then devour'd, by plucking off first one limb and then another till the body was left a helpless trunk; this, after grinning & kissing it with seeming fondness, they devour'd too: and here & there I saw one savourily picking the flesh off of his own tail; as the stench terribly annoy'd us both, we went into the mill, & I in my hand brought the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotle's Analytics.

So the Angel said: thy phantasy has imposed upon me, & thou oughtest to be ashamed.

I answer'd: we impose upon one another, & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics.

I HAVE always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning.

Thus Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new; tho' it is only the Contents or Index of already publish'd books.

A man carried a monkey about for a shew, & because he was a little wiser than the monkey, grew vain, & conciev'd himself as much wiser than seven men.

It is so with Swedenborg: he shews the folly of churches & exposes hypocrites, till he imagines that all are religious, & himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net.

Now hear a plain fact: Swedenborg has not written one new truth:

Now hear another: he has written all the old falshoods.

And now hear the reason. He conversed with Angels who are all religious, & conversed not with Devils who all hate religion, for he was incapable thro' his conceited notions.

Thus Swedenborg's writings are a recapitulation of all superficial opinions, and an analysis of the more sublime; but no further.

Have now another plain fact: Any man of me-

chanical talents may from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen, produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's, and from those of Dante or Shakespear, an infinite number.

But when he has done this, let him not say that he knows better than his master, for he only holds a candle in sunshine.

A MEMORABLE FANCY

ONCE I saw a Devil in a flame of fire, who arose before an Angel that sat on a cloud, and the Devil utter'd these words:

The worship of God is, Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God.

The Angel hearing this became almost blue, but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white pink & smiling, and then replied;

Thou Idolater, is not God One? & is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments, and are not all other men fools, sinners, & nothings?

The Devil answer'd: bray a fool in a morter with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him: if Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbath's God? murder those who were murder'd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid

them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them?

I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments: Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules.

When he had so spoken; I beheld the Angel, who stretched out his arms, embracing the flame of fire, & he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

NOTE. This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend: we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense, which the world shall have if they behave well.

I have also: The Bible of Hell; which the world shall have whether they will or no.

One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression.

A SONG OF LIBERTY

A SONG OF LIBERTY

1.

THE Eternal Female groan'd! it was heard over all the Earth:

2. Albion's coast is sick silent; the American meadows faint!

3. Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by the lakes and the rivers, and mutter across the ocean. France rend down thy dungeon;

4. Golden Spain burst the barriers of old Rome;

5. Cast thy keys O Rome into the deep down falling, even to eternity down falling,

6. And weep!

7. In her trembling hands she took the new born terror howling:

8. On those infinite mountains of light now barr'd out by the atlantic sea, the new born fire stood before the starry king!

9. Flag'd with grey brow'd snows and thunderous visages the jealous wings wav'd over the deep.

10. The speary hand burned aloft, unbuckled was the shield, forth went the hand of jealousy among the flaming hair, and hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night.

11. The fire, the fire, is falling!

12. Look up! look up! O citizen of London, enlarge thy countenance! O Jew, leave counting

gold! return to thy oil & wine; O African! black African! (go winged thought, widen his forehead.)

13. The fiery limbs, the flaming hair, shot like the sinking sun into the western sea.

14. Wak'd from his eternal sleep, the hoary element roaring fled away;

15. Down rush'd beating his wings in vain the jealous king; his grey brow'd councellors, thunderous warriors, curl'd veterans, among helms and shields and charots, horses, elephants, banners, castles, slings, and rocks;

16. Falling, rushing, ruining! buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens;

17. All night beneath the ruins, then their sullen flames faded emerge round the gloomy king.

18. With thunder and fire: leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness he promulgates his ten commands, glancing his beamy eyelids over the deep in dark dismay,

19. Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning plumes her golden breast,

20. Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying: Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease.

CHORUS

LET the priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren, whom, tyrant, he calls free: lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious letchery call that virginity, that wishes but acts not!

For every thing that lives is Holy.

Here ends "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"
and "A Song of Liberty," by William Blake,
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